

JOURNAL  
OF  
THE ASIATIC SOCIETY.

---

No. 73.—January, 1838.

---

I.—*History of Cooch Behár, being an extract of a passage from Dr. BUCHANAN'S Account of Rungpur (Rangapura)\*.*

[Revised and communicated by Major F. JENKINS.]

The history of this district is perhaps involved in still greater obscurity than that of *Dinajpur*. Almost the whole of it is included in the ancient Hindu territory of *Kamrup*, which extends east from the *Kurotoya* where it joined the kingdom of *Motsyo*, to† *Dikkorbasini* a river of *Assam*, which enters the *Brohmoputro* a little to the east of the eastern *Kamakhya*, which is said to be fourteen days' journey by water above *Jorehat* the present capital of the kingdom. I have not been able to learn, that the ancient Hindus mention any kingdom as intervening between *Kamrup* and *China*. Those whom I have consulted seem to think that *Kamrup* is bounded on the east by *Chin*; by which, however, it must be observed, is probably meant the country between the Indian and Chinese empires, for as ABUL FAZIL justly observes, the Chinese empire is the *Maha Chin* of the Hindus. He indeed calls *Pegu* the *China* of the Hindus; but in this he is only to be considered as mentioning for the whole, what was then the principal kingdom, as now we might say that the empire of *Ava* is the proper *China* of the Hindus; and in fact it now separates *Kamrup* from the Chinese or *Maha Chin*. On the north *Kamrup* extends to *Kongjogiri*, the frontier of *Madro*, the kingdom of *Sailyo*, which comprehends *Bhotan*; I have not, however, been able to learn where the mountain is placed, and the Bhoteas seem to have made large encroachments on the whole northern frontier of *Kamrup*. The southern boundary of *Kamrup* frontier of *Kamrup*, is

\* BUCHANAN'S orthography is retained: he uses the short *o* for *a*, being the Bengáli pronunciation.—ED.

† This is the name of a temple on the *Brahmaputra* above *Sadiyá*, and nearly where the river issues from the hills.

where *Lakhya* river separates from the *Brohmoputro*, and there it is bounded by the country called *Bunggo*. *Kamrup* according to this description includes a portion of *Moymunsing* (north part of *Dacca R.*) and of *Srihotta* (*Silhet B.*) together with *Monipur*, *Jaintiya*, *Kachar*, and *Assam*.

The earliest tradition concerning the history of *Kamrup* is that it was given by KRISHNO to NORAK, the son of the earth, (*Prithivi*.) This NOROK, although an infidel (*osur*) was for some time a favorite of the god, who appointed him guardian (*dwarpal*) of the temple of *Kamakhya* (granter of pleasure) who naturally presided over the region of desire, (*Kamrup*). This deity is by the Hindus considered as female, and her temple situated near *Gohati*, the place where NOROK resided, is still much frequented.

*Kamrup* is said to have been then divided into four *peths* or portions, which may naturally be expected to have appellations suitable to its name and tutelary deity. They are accordingly called *Kam*, *Rotno*, *Moni* and *Yoni peths*, alluding to desire, beauty and some circumstances not unconnected with these qualities, which our customs do not admit to be mentioned with the plainness that is allowed in the sacred languages of the east. In fact the country by the natives is considered as the principal seat of amorous delight, and a great indulgence is considered as allowable. I have not learned the boundaries of these divisions, but am told that *Rotno Peth* is the country now called *Vihar*.

NOROK did not long merit the favor of KRISHNO, being a great oppressor and a worshipper of the rival god SIB. He was put to death, and was succeeded by his son BHOGGODATTO. At the time of the wars which are said to have placed YUDHISHTHER on the throne of India, the prince engaged in the great contest on the losing side, and followed the fortunes of DURYODHON. There can be little doubt that this is the same person with the BHUGRUT of Mr. GLADWIN'S translation of the *Ayeen Akbery*, "who came to the assistance of JIRJODHUN, and gallantly fell in the war of the *Mahabharut*." By ABUL FAZIL this prince is said to have been of the *Khyetri* (*Khyotrio*) caste, and this is supported by the opinion of the brahmans; but here a considerable difficulty occurs; for it is generally allowed, that BHOGGODATTO was the son of NOROK, who was not a Hindu. We shall, however, soon see that in *Kamrup* many other personages have been adopted into the princely race, whose claims to a Hindu descent are at best exceedingly doubtful.

BHOGGODATTO is said to have usually resided at *Gowahati*. The king of *Kamrup* is said occasionally to have fled from the bustle and cares of his capital, and to have sought the pleasures of retirement

at *Runggopur*, from whence its name, signifying the abode of pleasure, is derived. No traces of any buildings by BHOGGODATTO or his family remain in this district, nor is it probable that any remain in *Assam*, as the princes of the eastern parts of *Kamrup* continue even to this day, to dwell in huts; nor is there any reason to suppose, that his accommodation was superior; while his power, and probably the thickness of his forest, rendered fortifications towards the west unnecessary.

In the great war BHOGGODATTO fell by the hands of ORJUN, brother of YUDHISHTHER, but according to the *Ayeen Akbery* twenty-three princes of the same family continued to govern after his death. The authority of this work is, however, diminished by its supposing that these princes governed the whole of Bengal, which seems entirely without foundation. It is, however, very likely, and is said indeed to be mentioned in the Purans, that for some time the descendants of BHOGGODATTO retained the government of *Kamrup*. I cannot indeed adopt the chronology, which places YUDHISHTHER about 3200 years before the birth of Christ; on the contrary I am persuaded that this prince lived considerably after the time of ALEXANDER, for in every part of India there remain traces of the family of YUDHISHTHER, or of the princes who were his contemporaries, of many dynasties that have governed since his time, but all these later dynasties, so far as I have learned, may be ascertained to be of a comparatively late period; and making every possible allowance for the reigns of the families of YUDHISHTHER and of the dynasties that have succeeded, we shall not be able to place the former much beyond the time of AUGUSTUS. I am happy to acknowledge that I have derived this manner of reasoning on the subjects from a conversation with my worthy friend Major MACKENZIE of *Madras*, who has formed more accurate notions on Indian History than any person whose opinions I know,—notions founded on a careful investigation of the remains of antiquity, and not on the fictions of Indian poets, who in the extravagance of invention exceed even the fertile genius of Greece.

In the part of the *Yogini Tontro* which I have procured, and which is considered as the highest authority concerning every thing to *Kamrup*, the pandit of the mission says that there is no mention of BHOGGODATTO, but that the god SIB prophecies that after the infidel NOROK, and at the commencement of the era of Saka, that is about the end of the 1st century of our era, there would be *Sudro* kings of *Kamrup*. The first rája mentioned is DWYESWOR, in whose time the worship of *Kameswori* or *Kamakhya*, the knowledge of which had hitherto been confined to the learned, would be published even to the vulgar, and this would happen at the very beginning of the era of Saka, or in the year of

our era 76. This rája is said to have been of the tribe called in the Songskrito language *Dhwor*, which is usually applied to the *Kaibortos* of Bengal; but it may be doubted, whether the prince belonged to that tribe which is not one of *Kamrup*. The worship of the *linga* according to the prophecy would begin in the 19th year of *Saka*; some indefinite time after that period, a brahman born of the *Korotoya* river and named *NOGOSONKOR*, would be king, and extend the doctrine. After him, but at what interval is not mentioned, would be a rája named *JOLPESWAR*, who would still further encourage that worship, and who would build the celebrated temple of *Jolpis*. Very considerable ruins are at no great distance from that place as will be hereafter described; but they are ascribed to a *Prithu*, who may, however, have been a person of the same family.

This *Prithu* rája from the size of his capital, and the numerous works raised in the vicinity by various dependents and connections of the court, must have governed a large extent of country, and for a considerable period of time. Although he is in some measure an object of worship among the neighbouring Hindus, they have few traditions concerning the place from whence he came, nor at what period he lived; and I heard it only mentioned by one old man, that he governed before the time of the dynasty which will be next mentioned.

As usual he is considered as having been a very holy personage, who was so much afraid of having his purity sullied, that, on the approach of an abominable tribe of impure feeders named *Kichok*, he threw himself into a tank, and was followed by all his guards, so that the town was given up to plunder, and the family ceased to reign. At present the *Kichok* are a kind of gipsies, that are thinly scattered in the northern parts of India, and live by snaring game, telling fortunes, and it is usually supposed by stealing. It must, however, be observed, that this tribe, which in the Songskrito language is called *Kirat*, would at one time appear to have been really powerful in this vicinity; and according to the *Yogini Tontro*, was not reduced to its present miserable state, until the time of *VISWO SINGHO*, who will be hereafter mentioned.

There is also a tradition in the country, that a much greater portion of *Kamrup* formerly belonged to the *Bhoteas* than does at present. I am inclined to think, that these *Bhoteas* were really the Chinese, whose histories, I believe, mention their conquests in this part of India, and might naturally be confounded with the *Bhoteas*, from their impure feeding and from having made their attack through the country of that people.

It would not appear, that during the dynasty of *ADISUR*, any part of this district was comprehended in the Hindu kingdom of Bengal. On

the contrary, about that time, or not long after, the western parts of this country, as far as the *Brohmoputro*, seem to have been subject to a family of princes, the first of whom, that has left any traces, was DHORMO PAL. Whether or not from his name we may suppose that he was one of the PAL family, which preceded the dynasty of ADISUR, who in the wreck of his family may have saved a portion, I shall not venture to determine. From the works that are attributed to DHORMO PAL, he would appear to have been a person of some power, and even the works attributed to relations and dependents of his family, possess some degree of magnitude. He is said to have had a brother named MANIKCHONDRO, who seems to have died early, and to have left the management of his son and estate to his wife MOYNAWOTE. This lady makes a conspicuous figure in the traditions of the natives, and is said to have killed DHORMO PAL in an engagement near the banks of the *Tista*; at least the rája disappeared during the battle between his troops, and those of his sister-in-law. MOYNAWOTE'S son GOPICHONDRO succeeded his uncle, and seems to have left the management of his affairs to his mother, and for some time to have indulged himself in the luxury of 100 wives, among whom the two most celebrated for beauty and rank were HODNA and PODNA, one of whom, if not both, was the daughter of a person of considerable rank named HORISCHONDRO. When GOPICHONDRO had grown up, and probably, when he had been satiated with the pleasure which women bestow, he wished to interfere in business. His mother had then the art to persuade him to dedicate his life to religion; and having placed him under the tuition of her spiritual guide (*guru*) HARIPA a religious mendicant, (*yogi*) of remarkable sanctity, this prince, changed from voluptuousness to superstition, adopted the same manner of life with his instructor, and is supposed to be now wandering in the forests. The people of *Kamrup* are still frequently entertained by the songs of itinerant bards of the low castes called *yogi*, who repeat the poem called *Sibergit*, which gives an account of GOPICHONDRO, of his pious resignation of power, and the lamentations of his hundred wives, who by no means approved of his change of life. This song is in the vulgar language, and its repetition occupies four or five Hindu hours for two days.

As the father is praised by the Hindus for his piety, his son HOROCHONDRO, or BHOVOCHONDRO as his name is here more usually pronounced, is given as an example of stupidity, who with his minister GOVOCHONDRO did nothing like other people, and turned night into day, and day into night. Many examples of their stupidity are related to serve as amusement to the youth of Bengal; but the rája seems to have lived

in considerable splendour, and without fear, while the works of his relation SORA and of his tributary BENNA show, that his dependents had considerable power, and did not require fortresses to enable them to live in security. After the death of BHOVOCHONDRO there came a *Pala* rája of the same family who is said to have been destroyed by a dynasty that I shall have next occasion to mention, although it is more probable that a period of anarchy intervened.

The princes of the dynasty of DHORMO PAL are supposed to have been *Khyotriyos*; yet this seems doubtful. The lady MOYNAWOTE had not a brahman for a spiritual guide, but this important office was held by a *yogi*, that is a *Sudra* dedicated to a religious life; and there is great reason to believe that the *yogis* who repeat the songs, are descendants of this kind of priesthood, who were degraded by SONGKOR ACHARYO, and who reject the brahmans as spiritual guides, although in order to procure a miserable existence they have now betaken themselves to weaving, burning lime, and other low employments. In the south of India they collect and vend drugs, and pretend to practise physic, but are equally obstinate in rejecting the instruction of the sacred orders.

With regard to the next dynasty there is greater certainty, although as usual the chronology is attended with many difficulties. According to tradition there was a brahman whose name is unknown, but who had a servant that tended his cattle, no one knows where. According to some this servant was an infidel (*osur*) most probably from the mountains of *Tripura*; but concerning this different persons are not exactly agreed, and some allege that it was his mother who was of the impure race, and that she bore her son while in the service of the brahman. Many complaints were lodged against this fellow, and his master one day was desired to view him asleep while his cattle were permitted to destroy the crops of the neighbours. The brahman was advancing with a determination to bestow the merited punishment, when he observed the lines on the naked feet of his servant, and immediately by his profound skill in the most noble science of *Samudrik Jyotishi*, knew that the sleeper would become a prince. On this discovery the brahman paid him all due respect, rendered it unnecessary for him to perform any low office, and shewed him still more kindness by disclosing the certainty of his future greatness; the servant in return promised that when he became a prince, the brahman should be his chief minister, (*Patro*). Accordingly some time afterwards, it is not known how, he became king, and is said to have destroyed PALA, the successor of HOROCHONDRO. This, however, as I have before observed, is rather doubtful; and *Kamrup* in the interval had probably fallen into a state of anarchy favorable

for an upstart, and was overrun by various rude tribes, *Koch, Mech, Garo, Kachhari, Rabha, Hajong, Tripura, Bhot,* and *Nepcha*, who neither spoke the language of Bengal, nor had adopted the religion of the brahmans, although numerous fugitives had taken refuge from the violence of Sultan JALALUDDIN, as mentioned in my account of *Dinajpur*, and had diffused some degree of instruction, or at least had preserved the little improvement that had been made in former dynasties.

The new rája seems to have been much guided by his minister the brahman, assumed a Hindu title *Nilodhwoj*, and placed himself under the tuition of the sacred order. For this purpose a colony of brahmans were introduced from *Maithilo*, and from thence we may perhaps infer the country of the minister. There is no trace of any earlier colony of brahmans in *Kamrup* than this from *Maithilo*, and the great merits of the prince were rewarded by elevating his tribe called *Khyen* to the dignity of the pure Hindu. It is, indeed, contended by RAJBONGSIS, that NILODHWOJ was of their caste, and that the *Khyen* were only his servants, begotten by RAJBONGSIS on prostitutes of the *Khyotriyo* tribe, but it seems highly improbable that the rája would procure the dignity of pure birth for the illegitimate offspring of his servants, while his own family remained in the impure tribe of RAJBONGSI, the origin of which seems to me of a later date.

The rája having settled his government built a city called *Komotapur*, and his successors took the title of *Komoteswor* or lords of *Komota*, while the title of *Komoteswari*, or lady of *Komota*, was bestowed on the family deity, a female spirit, as usual, delighting in blood.

As each rája of this family claimed his right to govern on the authority of some miracle, it was discovered by CHOKRODHWOJ, the second prince, that BHOGODATTO had received from SIB an amulet (*koboj*) which rendered him invulnerable, and which he usually wore on his arm. In the hurry of preparation for battle, this amulet had been left behind, on the day when BHOGODATTO was killed, and lay concealed near *Has-tinapur* until the time of CHOKRODHWOJ, when this prince was informed in a dream how the amulet might be found, and that it was to be worshipped as representing *Komoteswori*, as it is to this day.

During this dynasty the office of chief minister (*Patro*) seems to have been hereditary as well as the regal dignity, and the brahman and his descendants occupied a fortress contiguous to the walls of the city; but the government does not seem to have been very secure, as not only the royal palace and the residence of the minister, but several houses of inferior personages seem to have been fortified, although situated within the immense works by which the city was surrounded.

CHOKRODHOJ was succeeded by NILAMBOR, the third and last prince of the family. His dominions are said to have extended over the greater part of *Kamrup* and included part of *Motsyo*; for the fort at *Ghoraghat* is said to have been one of his erecting. Numerous public works, especially magnificent roads, are attributed to this prince, who from thence seems to have governed his country with attention, but the circumstances related concerning his overthrow are accompanied with traits of the most savage barbarity.

Whether from a natural suspiciousness of temper or from an uncommon accuracy of observing such circumstances, the rája on entering his women's apartments one day observed traces, which convinced him, that a man had been there. He was immediately inflamed with jealousy, and having sent people to watch, a young brahman, son of СОЧИ ПОТРО the prime minister, was soon caught attempting to enter the royal apartments and to dishonor his master. He was taken before the king, put privately to death, and part of his body was prepared for food. His father, having been invited to a grand entertainment given by the king eat of his son's body; for in *Kamrup* the brahmans are allowed great liberties in their diet. After he had satiated himself with this monstrous food, the king showed him his son's head, and informed him of the crime and of what he had been eating. The minister is said to have acted with a presence of mind well suited for such an occasion. He said, that his son had no doubt deserved any punishment; but as the king had made him eat such a horrid repast, that he could no longer continue in his service, but would retire from the world, and dedicate himself to the duties of a religious mendicant. By this stratagem he was allowed to retire, and having assumed the habit of a *sonnyashi*, immediately left *Kamrup*. His first object now was to procure revenge, and he proceeded without delay to *Gaur*, when he laid before the Moslem king information, that was followed by an attack on NILAMBOR. For some time however the invasion did not seem likely to terminate in success; for after a siege of 12 years the Moslem had made no impression on the works of *Komotapur*. Although the length of the siege is probably exceedingly exaggerated by tradition, its issue probably continued long doubtful; for the invading army had evidently fortified its camp with much care. The place is said to have been taken at length by stratagem, or rather by the most abominable treachery. The Muhammadan commander informed the king by message, that having lost all hopes of taking the place, he was desirous of making peace, and leaving the country on the most friendly terms. This having been accepted, it was proposed that the ladies of the Moslem chiefs should pay their respects to the queen. This



also was received as a mark of polite attention, and a number of covered litters were admitted into the women's apartments within the citadel. In place of Moslem ladies these litters contained arms, and the bearers were soldiers, who immediately on gaining admission seized their weapons, and secured the person of the rája, who was put into an iron cage in order to afford amusement for the sultan and populace of *Gaur*; on the way he contrived to escape, and has ever since remained concealed.

The Muhammadans of *Ghoraghat* attribute the destruction of NILAMBOR to their favorable saint ISMAEL G'AZI of whom I have given an account in the report concerning *Dinajpur*. By the Moslems of this district he is considered as a chief of saints, and several places of worship are erected to his memory, or over precious relics that belonged to his person. But this reverence has probably induced them to magnify the conquests of ISMAEL who governed *Ghoraghat* in the reign of NASRAT SHÁH; a prince whose reign commenced about the year of our era 1523, which seems to be somewhat too late for the destruction of *Komotapur*.

In the manuscript account of *Bengal*, which I procured at *Maldeh*, it is said, that the sultan HOSEYN, immediate predecessor of NASRAT, conquered *Kamrup*, and killed its king KARUP NARAIN, son of MAL-KONGYAR, son of SADA LUKHYMON, and I have no doubt, that these are the same persons with the three princes of *Komotapur*; for the Hindu rájas have so many titles, that one person may choose to call them by a name totally different from that which another person may choose to employ; and the time of the events will not admit of our supposing that a dynasty intervened between that destroyed by HOSEYN, and the one which now governs the small portion of *Kamrup* that retains some degree of independence.

In the short account of *Assam* published in the 2nd volume of the Asiatic Researches, which seems to me more accurate than the commentator is willing to admit, it is stated, that HUSEYN SHAH, a king of Bengal, undertook an expedition against *Assam*, in which he had at first considerable success. The rája retired to the mountains, and the son of the king was left with a large army to keep possession of the country. In the rainy season the rája descended into the plains, and destroyed the whole invading army, who were all either killed or made prisoners (A. R. II. p. 180). It was probably this rash expedition, which frustrated the conquest of *Komotapur*, and rendered it necessary for the Moslems to retire, after a possession of one or two years. Indeed the traditions of the Hindus state, that they made no stay at *Komotapur*, but retreated

immediately with what booty they could procure. This, however, seems improbable, and I shall have occasion to show, that within the walls of *Komota* there are probable traces of the Moslems having begun very considerable works, which have been broken off unfinished; it is therefore probable that *NILAMBOR* was destroyed by *HOSEYN SHAH* in person, and he begun to reign about forty years before the usurpation of *SHER SHAH*, or about the year 1496 of our era. The conquests therefore of *ISMAEL G'AZI* must be confined to the vicinity of *Ghoraghat*, and perhaps he did no more than retain these small portions of the conquests made by the sultan *HOSEYN*, where he founded the city named after *NASRAT*, the successor of that prince.

The overthrow of *NILAMBOR* is looked upon by the natives as a most unfortunate event. In the *Yogini Tontro*, it is told, that in the time of *NOROK*, a most holy person, *VOSISHTHO MONI* went to the temple of *Kamakhya* and was refused admittance by the infidel guardian. As such persons conscious of their worth are sometimes apt to be a great deal too irascible, *VOSISHTHO* prayed that the temple might be deprived of all dignity, which accordingly would have immediately happened, had not the goddess of love (*KAMAKHYA*) made a complaint to *SIVA*, who although he could not entirely prevent the effects of the holy man's imprecation (*sang pon*); yet postponed the completion until the destruction of *Komotapur*, and he ordered, that this degradation should continue only until the restoration of the *Komoteswar*, who, as I have said, is supposed to be still alive, and his return is anxiously and eagerly expected by the people of *Kamrup*, as some of the events which are prophecied to precede the restoration, have already come to pass. On that happy occasion the goddess of delight will be restored to full glory, and the four nations of usurpers who now share *Kamrup*, will be extirpated by mutual slaughter. These nations are the *Ploo!* or *Bhoteas*; the *Sauumar* or *Assamese*; the *Kuvach* or *Koch*, who govern *Vihar*; and the *Yoveu* or barbarians of the west, who, according to the authority of the *Yogini Tontro*, are descendants of *HAIHOYO* and *TALJONGGHO*, two *Khoyotriyos*, who on account of cowardice were degraded and prohibited from eating pure food, and from following the doctrine of the *Vedas*.

Two brothers named *CHONDON* and *MODON*, after the overthrow of *NILAMBOR*, established a short government of eight years at a place called *Norolovas*, which now is under the government of the *DEB rája*, and is about thirty miles north from *Komotapur*. This power was not only transient, but seems to have extended to no great distance, and the parts of *Kamrup* that were not retained by the Moslems, seem to have fallen again into anarchy under the chiefs of the rude tribes, which I

formerly mentioned. Among these by far the most powerful were the *Koch*, who had a number of chiefs, at first independent, but who gradually united under the authority of one of themselves named HAJO. He seems to have been a person of great vigour, and reduced under his government the whole of this district except *Ghoraghat*, together with most of that portion of *Assam* which is included in the government of *Gohati* or *Kamrup*. He had no children, except two daughters HIRA and JIRA.

HIRA, before the rise of her family, had been married to a certain HERYA, who is said to have been of the impure tribe called *Mech*. Whether JIRA was married or not is not known, but she had a son named SISU, while her sister bore a son named VISU. The former is said to be ancestor of several branches of the family that are now subject to the company; but VISU succeeded to the whole power of his grandfather. As he was not contented with the instruction of the *Kolitas*, who seem to have been the original priesthood of his tribe, nor with the learning of the brahmans of *Maithilo*, who had been formerly introduced, he procured some men of piety (*Baidiks*) from *Srihotta*, and gave them the title of *Kamrupi* brahmans, and these form the second colony of the sacred order that has settled in this country.

To this era may probably be referred the composition, or as the Hindus would say the publication of many, or most of the books called *Tontros* which are supposed to have been communicated by the god SIVA to his wife PARBOTI about 5000 years ago. One of the most celebrated of these compositions the *Yogini Tontro* I am indeed informed, mentions the amours of HIRA and the government of her son; nor is there any doubt that *Kamrup* is usually considered as the grand source of this system of magic, and the period between the time of VISU and of his great-grandson PORIKHYIT seems to have been the only period, when the learning of the brahmans flourished in that country. The doctrines contained in these works admit of many indulgences necessary for new converts, and to enable the brahmans to share in the pleasures of a most sensual people; and they inculcate chiefly the worship of the female spirits that are appeased with blood, which was the original worship of the country, and which has now become very generally diffused among the brahmans of Bengal, with whom these *Tontros* are in the highest request.

It was now discovered that the rája was not a son of the poor barbarian HERYA; but that his mother although born a *Koch*, was not only of a celestial origin, but had been the peculiar favorite of the god SIVA; who had passed much time in amorous dalliance with the damsel, and was the actual father of the prince, who took the name of VISWO SINGHO,

and bestowed on the son of his aunt JIRA that of SIVA SINGHO; and this prince also claimed for his mother, the honor of the most intimate favor of the god, whose name he bore.

Although the *Yogini Tontro* calls the father of HIRA a barbarian (*Mlechchho*); yet it has been discovered, that the *Koch* were not in fact an impure tribe, as had been in general supposed; but were descended from some *Khyotriyos*, who had fled into *Kamrup*, and the adjacent country of *Chin*, in order to escape from the violence of POROSURAM, when that deity pursued the kings of the earth, and gave their territories to the brahmans. In the exile the descendants of the *Khyotriyos* had departed from many parts of the Hindu law; and on this account were considered impure. This seems to be exactly the same story, which Sir WILLIAM JONES quotes (A. R. II. page 368), from the Institutes of MENU, and on the authority of which he deduced the origin of the Chinese from the Hindus. The features both of Chinese and *Koch* seem to me insuperable objections against that theory; and I have no doubt, that both the passage of Menu and the fable of the *Koch* are equally founded on national vanity, which, however unbecoming in a lawyer or philosopher like MENU, is excusable enough in the *Koch*, who among the people with whom it is their fortune to live, are naturally desirous of procuring some means of being raised from the dregs of impurity. On this pretended descent the *Koch*, or at least all of them that have adopted the Hindu religion and have relinquished their impure practices, assume the title of *Rajbongsis*, or descendants of princes; and the other rude tribes of *Kamrup* and *Chin*, such as *Mech* and *Hajong*, who have followed their example in religion, have assumed the same title. All the descendants of HIRA, still farther elated by their supposed divine origin, assume the title of *Deb* or Lord, and all the reigning princes of the family claim the title of *Narayan*; which among the Hindus is one of the names of the supreme deity.

VISWO SINGHO was so weak as to divide his dominions between two sons NARO NARAYON and SUKLADHWOY. The former obtained the country west from the *Chhannokosh*, the latter obtained the country east from that river, together with both sides of the *Brohmoputro*. I shall now proceed to give an account of this branch of the family which was the most considerable.

SUKLADHWOY seems to have governed without any remarkable event, and left his dominions to his son ROGHU DEV NARAYON. He had two sons PORIKHYIT N. and another\*, who as an appanage obtained *Dorong* which his descendants still retain under the kings of *Assam*. PORIKHYIT

\* BOLLIT NARAYON.

however, prudently retained the sovereignty of the whole, and lived at *Gilajhar* on the west side of the *Godadhor* where the only remains to be seen, although the place is also called *Atharo Kotha*, or eighteen castles, clearly evince the small improvement which his people had made in the arts; but his court seems to have flourished in learning, and 700 brahmans are said to have resided at his capital.

When ABUL FAZIL composed the *Ayin Akbery*, the sub-division of the kingdom of VISWO SINGHO was not known at *Delhi*; although in all probability it had recently taken place. From prudential motives it had perhaps been carefully concealed, and the two branches of the family lived in an amity that was absolutely necessary for their safety. ABUL FAZIL says that "north from Bengal is the province of *Cooch (Koch)* the chief of which commands 1000 horse and 100,000 foot (the usual oriental exaggeration). *Kamrup*, which is also called *Kamtah (Komota)* the old capital) makes a part of his dominion." Soon after this, however it is said, that the Muhammadan governor of *Dhaka* discovered the real state of affairs, and became very urgent with PORIKHYIT for tribute. The rája being afraid did not absolutely refuse to comply, but in order to procure favorable terms was advised to undertake a journey to *Agra*, where he was kindly received, and procured an order from the king, directing the governor to take whatever tribute the rája chose to offer. On returning to *Dacca*, the rája who was totally ignorant of human affairs, and of the immensity of the sum offered 20,000,000 of rupees and returned to his capital highly satisfied with his conduct. When his minister (*Patro*) explained to him the nature of the promise which he had made, the poor rája was thrown into consternation, and again set out for *Agra*, taking his minister with him, in order to avoid such mistakes. Unfortunately he died by the way and the Moslems, in the mean time, took possession of the country, in order to recover the money that had been promised\*. The minister proceeded to court, where after some trouble he was appointed kanungoe or register of the country, which was divided into four sirkars. *Uttro Kul* or *Dhengkiri* north of the *Brohmoputro*, *Dokhin Kul* south of the same, *Benggalbhumi* west of the *Brohmoputro*, and *Kamrup proper* called so as containing *Gohati*, the most ancient capital of the country. The brother of PORIKHYIT was confirmed in his government of *Dorong*, and CHONDRO NARAYON, the son of the unfortunate rája, received very large estates which his descendants still retain as subjects. These I shall afterwards have occasion to mention. Large estates were also given to the new kanungoe from whose family papers these accounts are taken.

\* PORIKHYIT's descendants are the rájas of *Bijnée* according to the records of the Durrang family.

The Moslem army took possession of the country about the year 1009 of the Bengal era, that is A. D. 1603 or two years before the death of AKBER. A Mogul general (Fouzdar) resided at *Ranggamati*, and the country is said for many years to have undergone considerable improvements, especially under the government of a certain noble Hindu named MANOSINGHO.

The usual desire of encroachment, however, induced the Moslems in the reign of AURUNGZEBE, to invade *Assam*, the limits of which were then very narrow, but the people were fierce of their independence, were invigorated by a nourishing diet and strong drink, and their princes still retained their energy of mind and had not sunk under the enervating and unceasing ceremonies of the Hindu doctrine. The Mogul army under MEER JUMLA was completely destroyed, and they were compelled to cede to the Assamese the whole of Sirkar *Kamrup*, and a portion of *Uttorkul* and *Dokhyin Kul*, which have ever since been placed under the management of a great Assamese officer, and form the government of *Kamrup*, which is about a third part of the whole kingdom. After a residence of 73 years, the Muhammadans withdrew the (*Foujdari*) government of *Ranggamati*, and placed the station of the governor of the frontier at *Ghoraghat*, as I have mentioned in my account of *Dinajepur*. Still, however, an officer dignified with the title of Nawab resided at *Ranggamati* with some troops; but it seemed to have been the wish of the Mogul government to encourage the growth of forests and reeds, which might serve as a check to the incursions of the Assamese; and nothing was required of the chiefs descended from POKIKHYIT, nor from the zemindars of the hilly countries, but a tribute in a great measure nominal.

The conversion of the kings of *Assam* to the doctrines of the brahmins of Bengal, which happened soon after the overthrow of MEER JUMLA seems to have put a total stop to their enterprise, and the petty chiefs, who remained nominally under the authority of the nawab of *Ranggamati*, would have been entirely uninterrupted in cutting each other's throats, and in reducing the country to a desert, had not they been assisted by the *Bhoteas*, who brought several of them under their authority and continued advancing, when the Company's gigantic power put a stop to all petty attacks of that nature. A tolerably settled frontier has been obtained; there are some appearances of a regular government, and cultivation is beginning to revive, although it is still much retarded by the constant squabbles of the chiefs, and the liberty which they take of dictating to all who reside on their property.

I shall now finish this historical view with an account of the western division of VISWO SINGHO's dominions, which fell to the share of his son

NORO NARAIN. This division comprehended the whole northern parts from the *Chhonmokosh* to the *Mohananda*, and from Sirkar *Ghoragehat* to the mountains of *Bhotan*, being a very fertile tract of country about 90 miles from N. W. to S. E. and 60 miles from N. E. to S. W. The north-west extremity of this territory was settled on the descendants of SIVO SINGHO the son of JIRA, the grand-aunt of NARO N. from among whom the rajas were bound to choose their chief ministers (*Raykot*). This portion, as producing an income of 32,000 rupees a year, was called *Botrishazai* (*Batis hazari R.*) but the general name given to the principality was *Vihar*, as having been the scene of the voluptuous intercourse between SIVA and the daughters of HAJO. In order to distinguish this *Vihar* from the large territory of the same name near *Patna* it has been usual to call it *Koch Vihar* (*Coos Beyhar*, RENN.); but all remembrance of the *Koch* is disagreeable to its princes, and at their capital all additional appellations given to *Vihar* are considered as exceedingly uncourtly\*.

The following is the succession of these princes; but among these after the fifth generation are some sons by adoption, and some co-lateral, and it is alleged illegitimate successors, of which I have been able to procure no satisfactory account: 1st NORO N., 2nd LOKHYMI N., 3rd VER N., 4th PRAN N., 5th MOD N., 6th VOSUDEV N., 7th MOHINDRO N., 8th DINO N., 9th RUPO N. †, 10th UPENDRO N., 11th DEVENDRO N., 12th DHAIRJYENDRO N., 13th RAJENDRO N., 14th DHORENDRO N., 15th VIJENDRO N. †, 16th KHOGENDRO N. §, 17th HORENDRO N., the

\* The name of *Kusha vihar* is doubtless derived, though the people now know nothing of it, from the Buddhist monastery or *vihara* which existed there in ancient times, as did the province of *Behár* from another monastery near *Gaya*, or at *Behár*.

We know from M. CSOMA'S Life of SHA'KYA (As. Res. XX. 310), that this MUNI died at *Kusha* the capital of *Kamrup*, (so called from the *Kusha* grass for which it was famous:) and that the *Chaitya* "of the head ornament" was distant about four miles from the pair of *sál* trees near this town, under which he expired (p. 311); for says KUNGAVO—"in all the space from the city of *Kusha* to the river *Yig-dán*, (the *Toresha*?) from the grove of the *sál* trees to the *Chaitya*, 12 miles in circumference, there is not a single spot which is not occupied by wise gods of great power—some rolling on the ground, some wringing their hands, uttering ejaculations, some oppressed by great sorrow, sit still, and some depending on religion say, 'The lord who instructed us in many things that were pleasing, agreeable and delightful to the heart, has been delivered from pain!' " It would be very desirable to examine the site and remains of the *Kusha-vihara* minutely, as it can hardly be doubted that the place, whose champions contended for the possession of *Buddha*'s relics with the eight chief powers of India, must have been at that time, and long after, a town of great importance. The rich valley of *Assam* was probably then what it seems again destined to become in a few years.—ED.

† An usurper, only reigned a few days or weeks. ‡ DHAIRJYENDRO N. restored?

§ KHOGENDRO, was the *Nazir deo* who actually governed the country but never assumed the title of raja.

reigning prince. By the natives he is considered as a very pious person, for he pays no attention to business, but passes the whole of his time in retirement and as is supposed, much of it in prayers ; and as he lays out much money in supporting men dedicated to a religious life, of course his temporal affairs are not flourishing, and his people would probably suffer less, were he more attentive to their government ; for he is said to be desirous of rendering justice. At present the whole management of the country is left to strangers, who are alleged to be mere sharks, but all the chiefs of the *Rajbongsis* are like their prince ; no one is said to be either able or willing to attend to business. It is supposed by the natives that the gods have bestowed an extraordinary reward on the virtue of the rája. He has 50 wives, and it is commonly reported, and gravely asserted to be believed, that all these ladies have often, in the course of one day, received the most intimate proof of the rája's affection and extraordinary vigour. The accounts which I have heard of this chief from Europeans, who were all acquainted with him, differ a good deal from the above, and represent him as a poor creature exhausted by drunkenness and debauchery.

The *Vihar* rájas reckon by the era of their ancestor VISWO, and suppose that he began in the Bengal year 916 or A. D. 1509. This is scarcely reconcilable with the supposition that HOSEYN SHAH destroyed *Komotapur* after a long siege, as he began about 1496 ; especially if we suppose, that a long anarchy took place between the governments of NILAMBOR and VISWO. I can only suppose that HAJO immediately after the retreat of the Moslems began to acquire great power, and that the era begins with the independence of the country, in place of being reckoned from the reign of VISWO, the impure HAJO being considered by the descendants of the gods as an unworthy connection. It must farther be observed, that from an inscription on a temple erected by PRAN NARAYON, the great-grandson of VISWO, that prince was alive in the year of *Sakadityo* 1587 or A. D. 1665, so that five reigns according to the era of VISWO, occupied 156 years while the thirteen following reigns have only occupied 144 years. It must be also observed, that the era of VISWO does not appear to have been in use in the year 1665, and is a recent invention which can have no great authority ; yet I do not think it much antedated, as the government of PORIKHYIT, a great-grandson of VISWO, was destroyed in the year 1603.

After the division of their territory into two principalities, the *Koch*, sensible of their weakness, are said to have erected a line of fortifications along their southern frontier. This still remains, and is attributed to MOD, the 5th prince of *Vihar*, but it proved an effectual protection to



his part of the country for only a very short period. About the beginning of the 18th century the Muhammadans, under the command of a certain EBADUT KHAN, were able to wrest from his descendants the districts which in the Bengal atlas were called *Boodah* and *Rungpur*; and, as if they had conquered the whole, erected them into a new sirkar called *Koch Vihar* or *Kochar*. Indeed it comprehends at least a third of the whole principality, and that by far the most improved, although this is probably owing, in a great measure to its change of masters.

The confusion that ensued in the Mogul government secured the *Vihar* family from farther encroachment on that side, but their reduced state now exposed them to the depredations of DEV rája who deprived them of one half of their remaining territories. The attack indeed was on the point of proving entirely ruinous, when DORPO DEV the *Raykot*, or hereditary minister, having laid aside all regard to his duty, rebelled against his sovereign and kinsman. He entered into an alliance with the DEV rája, and ceded to him a considerable portion of the *Bottris-hazári*, on condition of being supported in overthrowing the rája, to whose title in fact there were some objections. Having procured troops from *Bhotan* he invaded *Vihar*. The rája in despair\* applied for assistance to the Company, and to secure protection engaged to pay one half of his revenue. Accordingly in 1772 Captain JONES with a battalion of sepoys routed DORPO DEV, who took refuge in *Bhotan*. Captain JONES followed and in 1773 took the fortress of *Dolim Koth*, on which the DEV rája and DORPO sued for peace. This was granted, and the parts of *Bottris-hazári* that had not been ceded to *Bhotan*, were restored to DORPO; but he was placed exactly on the same footing as an ordinary zemindar, and a revenue was fixed on his lands, while he lost all authority in the remnant of *Vihar* which does not now exceed one-third of its original dimensions, and pays as a tribute what is supposed to be one half of its net revenue. In settling the frontier great favor and lenity seem to have been shown to the *Bhoteas*, probably with a view of gaining their friendship in an expectation of commercial advantages, that would appear to be chimerical; some favor, however, has also been shown to the rája. When the Moslems settled their new conquest of sirkar *Kooch Vihar*, they gave the zemindaries, or management of the soil, to various officers and servants of the rája, by whose treachery they probably had been assisted. Among these, three considerable estates were in the possession of a branch of the family, from among the members of which the *Nazir deo* or commander of the troops, was always ap-

\* The rája was carried off by the *Bhoteas* and the *Nazir deo* applied to the English Government.

pointed ; and these estates had been granted as a part of the means by which the expense of the army was to be defrayed. The descendants of the *Nazir deo* had enjoyed these estates from the time of the Moslem conquest, but on the British army being bound by treaty to defend the country, the rája represented that he had no occasion to support a military establishment, and that therefore the general had no pretence for keeping lands to enable him to maintain soldiers. It has been thought just to allow the rája to enjoy these estates as a zemindar, and to receive whatever profits may be derived from their management. The possession which the *Nazir deo* had obtained from the Moslems seems to render the case doubtful ; but the claim of the rája is certainly possessed of great weight\*.

\* In 1788-89, Messrs. MERCER and CHANNET were appointed to investigate amongst other matters, the respective claims of the rája and *Nazir Deo*. From the documents presented to them there does not appear to be any grounds for supposing that the Moslems had any thing to do with the partition of the country into three estates between the Rája, the *Nazir Deo*, and *Dewan Deo*. For some generations the rájas had been appointed by the *Nazir Deo*, and it was acknowledged to the commissioners that the *Nazir Deo's* sanction was necessary to give validity to the enthronement of the rájas. The *Nazir Deo* claimed a 9 anas 10 cowry share in the ráj, and though this may seem exorbitant, yet considering the power of the *Nazir Deos* as commanders in chief, it may be believed that the rájas, who were entirely indebted to the *Nazir Deos* for their thrones, had voluntarily submitted to the considerations proposed by the *Nazir Deos*. The commissioners gave no opinion on the respective claims, but merely submitted the evidence collected by them to Government. Amongst the documents submitted, are the accounts of receipts and disbursements of the ráj from 1181 to 1189 B. E. or during the period of the reigns of the two preceding rájas and the two first years of the reign of the present rája. In these accounts the collections are entered in the names of the three sharers according to their respective shares, and the disbursements are made in the same manner. The Company's tribute, which is expressly for the maintenance of troops, and the pay of the retained Sebundies, are thus made general charges against the three sharers, not against the *Nazir Deo* alone ; and in the same manner are charged all the Durbar charges and charges of the courts, not against the rája's share only. This seems to disprove the rája's claim. For many years these claims were under discussion with our Government, and the *Nazir* was obliged to be satisfied, until they were settled, with a small estate and 500 rupees a month. At length the Government on a discovery of the rája's independence, and the *Nazir Deo's* subjection to him, declined to interfere and referred the claims to the justice, equity, and good conscience of the rája. It seems needless to add, that the *Nazir Deo's* claims are still in abeyance, but the rája has ever since been endeavouring to recover half the estate settled on the *Nazir Deo* through the intercession of the British Government—F. J.

*List of Rájas of Cooch Behár of the SEEBO BONGSO, or Siva Dynasty.*

1510. BISSO SINGH—Founder of the dynasty, and said to be of divine origin; his brother SEESO SINGH ROYCOT, was the ancestor of the *Bykuntpur* rájas.
1553. NORNARAIN, son of BISSO SINGH, whose younger brothers were SOOKLADUDGE, CHILLARAI and NORSINGH. The two first appear to have invaded *Assam*, and the present rájas of *Durrung Bijnee* and *Beltollah* trace their descent from SOOKLADUDGE; from the third brother are descended the rájas of *Pungah* in *Rungpur*.
1587. LOKHENARAIN, son of NORNARAIN.\*
1621. BEERNARAIN, son of LOKHENARAIN.
1626. PRANNARAIN, son of BEERNARAIN.
1665. MOHUDNARAIN, son of PRANNARAIN, died without issue.
1680. BUSTODEBNARAIN, third brother of the preceding; he was put to death by JUGOONARAIN NAZIR DEO, son of GOSSINE MOHEENARAIN NAZIR DEO, on which BHOJE DEO and JUG DEO brought up a force from *Bykuntpur*, put to flight the *Nazir Deo*, and set up MOHINDERNARAIN as rája. He died without issue.
1682. MOHINDERNARAIN, son of MANNARAIN, the son of BISSONARAIN, second brother of BUSTODEBNARAIN. He dying without issue, *Cooch Behár* was again invaded by BHOJE DEO and JUG DEO, rájas of *Bykuntpur*, but were defeated by SONTONARAIN, then the *Nazir Deo*, a grandson of GOSSINE MOHEENARAIN, brother of rája BEERNARAIN, who set up his first cousin on the throne.
1693. ROOPNARAIN, son of JOGGOTNARAIN, the eldest son of GOSSINE MOHEENARAIN. On his succession *Cooch Behár* appears to have been divided into three shares, between the Rája, the *Nazir Deo*, and the *Nazir Deo's* elder brother, SUTTNARAIN, who was created *Dewan Deo*.
1714. OPEENDERNARAIN, great-great-great grandson of ROOPNARAIN, was set up by KOGHINDERNARAIN, *Nazir Deo*, his great uncle; but DEENNARAIN the son of the *Dewan Deo*, SUTTNARAIN, attempted to seize the throne with the assistance of some Mogul troops; he was, however, defeated, and fled to *Rangpur*.
1763. DEBINDERNARAIN, succeeded his father OPEENDERNARAIN, and died without issue.
1765. DURGINDERNARAIN, son of KURGNARAIN, *Dewan Deo*, brother of OPEENDERNARAIN, succeeded DURJINDERNARAIN, being carried off by the *Bhoteahs*, the *Nazir Deo*, KOGHINDERNARAIN, set up DURJINDERNARAIN's brother, RAJINDERNARAIN.
1769. RAJINDERNARAIN, was succeeded by DURJINDERNARAIN's son.
1771. HURRINDERNARAIN: the year after he ascended the throne, KOGHINDERNARAIN the *Nazir Deo* called in the assistance of the British, with whom he made a treaty in 1772, in consequence of the defeat of the *Bhoteahs* by the British troops under Captain JONES, DUJINDERNARAIN was released and again succeeded to the throne, on his son's death.
1774. DURGINDERNARAIN: he was succeeded by his second son.
1782. HURRINDERNARAIN, the present rája who had seven sons, viz. SEEBINDERNARAIN\*, MEGINDERNARAIN†, MOHINDERNARAIN‡, BHOJINDERNARAIN§, POOLINDERNARAIN, JAOGINDERNARAIN, NEEROINDERNARAIN.

\* Living.

† Dead. ?

‡ Dead. ?

§ The rája wishes this son to be considered his successor, but he has not been created *Joub rája*, (*Yuwárhja*).—F. J.

J. F.